

Red Flag Fire Alert

from the SC Forestry Commission



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Red Flag Fire Alert issued statewide for Wednesday and Thursday

SCFC urges vigilance when burning, making notification, taking proper precautions

COLUMBIA—The South Carolina Forestry Commission is calling for a Red Flag Fire Alert for Wednesday and Thursday, April 21 and 22. The alert will go into effect Wednesday at 7 a.m.

The alert is being issued to discourage people from burning outdoors when weather conditions present an elevated risk of wildfire. The weather forecast statewide over the next two days calls for stronger-than-normal wind gusts and low relative humidity, creating the potential for outdoor fires to escape easily and spread rapidly. The alert is likely to be lifted after Thursday when relative humidity rises and overall fire danger abates.

“With the National Weather Service predicting steady winds at 15-20 mph and relative humidity values as low as 25%, we really want to ask people to consider postponing their outdoor burning until the weekend when conditions improve,” said SCFC Fire Chief Darryl Jones. “Low relative humidity presents enough wildfire risk on its own, but when coupled with sustained winds for two consecutive days, the need for vigilance is very much heightened.”

A Red Flag Fire Alert does not prohibit outdoor burning, provided that all other state and local regulations are followed, but the Forestry Commission strongly encourages citizens to voluntarily postpone any such burning until the alert is lifted. However, a Red Flag Fire Alert does trigger certain county or local ordinances that restrict outdoor fires, so residents should contact their local fire departments to check whether such restrictions apply in their areas.

The alert will remain in effect until lifted by the Commission, whose fire managers will continuously monitor the situation.

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Did you know...?

A Forestry Commission Red Flag Fire Alert is sometimes confused with a National Weather Service Red Flag Warning. The NWS Warning is issued when its forecast includes any two of the following conditions: sustained wind speeds in excess of 20 mph; significant wind shifts; relative humidity of 25% or lower; and high lightning potential.

An astounding 98 percent of all wildland fires are caused by human activities, and escaped debris burns are responsible for nearly 50 percent of them. South Carolina Forestry Commission firefighters respond to an average of 2,500 wildland fires every year, burning about 18,000 acres annually.

As the only state agency responsible for wildfire suppression in all unincorporated areas of the state, the South Carolina Forestry Commission protects 13.6 million acres from wildland fire. More than 500 county, municipal and volunteer fire departments operate more than 1,100 fire stations in South Carolina. The Forestry Commission cooperates with these departments to prevent and control structural and wildland fires, employing highly trained firefighters and specialized equipment when fires burn into forested areas that are difficult to reach.